National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority

611. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has put in circulation, inviting suggestions for formation of "National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority";

(b) if so, whether a committee of leading scientists, including Dr. P.M. Bhargava, of different disciplines of a vast field of Biotechnology was formed, to scientifically evolve a broad-based "National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority", as Biotechnology covers 30 areas which needs to be regulated, as they pertain to stem cells, Nano-Biotechnology, Biological warfare, Vaccines, Bio-informatics, organ-transplantation, New Drug Delivery Systems, New materials such as spider silk and bacterial ropes, plant-based traditional drug formulations and assisted reproductive technologies;

(c) if so, the details of scientists involved in the committee; and

(d) if not, the reasons for not forming such a crucial scientific committee?

THE MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) and (c) The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology has been entrusted to act as a nodal agency as per its mandate to establish "National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority" (NBRA) and introduction of a legislation proposed as "National Biotechnology Regulatory Bill" (NBR Bill) empowering the authority and its scope. Accordingly, a consultative group of experts have prepared draft establishment plan of NBRA and the proposed Bill. Both the draft documents were placed on the websites www.dbtindia.nic.in and www.igmoris.nic.in on May 27,2008 inviting suggestions from public and concerned stakeholders during a period of 60 days or till July 31, 2008. A notification was also issued in this effect in national /regional dailies (Hindi/English). For sending the written comments, a special email address nbra.dbt@nic.in was also opened. As on July 31, 2008, more than 150 written suggestions/comments from various stakeholders have been received. In addition, nine special consultative meetings with stakeholders were also organized by the Department during the month of June-July 2008 in major cities of India which include one meeting each with the representatives of the State Governments, media, legal experts and six consultations with multiple stakeholders from academica, industry, government, NGOs. A total of more than 500 participants including Dr. P.M. Bhargava attended these consultations and provided valuable suggestions.

An Interdisciplinary and Inter-ministerial Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan was also constituted to oversee and advise on all matters related to drafting, reviewing the comments of experts and stakeholders as well as preparing final documents for further action by the Department as per Governmental procedures. The Advisory Committee consisted of 27 members including experts representing different disciplines of biotechnology applications from Universities, Research Institutions, Industry and Non-Governmental Organizations as well as Senior Government officials from concerned Ministries/Departments.

(d) Does not arise.